SOUTHERN EXPRESS '88

No. 4

The Journal of
The Merchant Navy Locomotive Preservation
Society Limited

MERCHANT NAVY LOCOMOTIVE PRESERVATION SOCIETY LTD.

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TWENTY-ONE YEARS YOUNG

No. 67

Saturday, 1st October, 1988, must have been a red letter day in the lives of those members who started our Society and saved Clan Line for posterity, way back in 1967. We all know that one—probably the greatest—of their ambitions was realised on that day when '28 went on show at Waterloo.

In spite of the lack of pre-event publicity—we had been asked not to shout it to the rooftops—the crowds were mammoth in size all day. The sales stand and donation boxes both did a roaring trade, I'm glad to report. We all sat down—in shifts—to roast beef, Yorkshire pudding, and the trimmings by way of a celebration lunch. This was cooked, served and washed up by Eileen Bellamy virtually on her own. Thank you Eileen, it made a great day into a superbly great one!

The journey down to Basingstoke, was equally nostalgic, with the footplate crew—one of whom at least must have belonged to the Bournemouth School of Whistling—announcing our approach at every station. It is rumoured that one member actually swooned at Wimbledon, he was so overcome!

All in all it was a most fitting way to celebrate the Coming of Age of our Society.

So: the first twenty-one years are over. What of the next twenty-one? Dare we look that far forward? Who is going to look after Clan Line in the years to come? One thing is certain—there will always be somebody. Our Society was founded by people who were then much younger and today the average age of a working party is (I guess) between 45 and 50. There are a few notable exceptions to this, but very few.

Now, main line running is the only form of preservation which uses the object of preservation for the purpose for which it was designed. What is more it gives a great number of people—both old and young—a great deal of pleasure. The problems are that it is both labour intensive and expensive—even if the labour is free.

So, come on all you under 20's, under 30's and under 40's, get involved with Clan Line, give your model railways a break and enjoy yourselves giving others the pleasure of travelling behind a 12 ins. to the foot scale model.

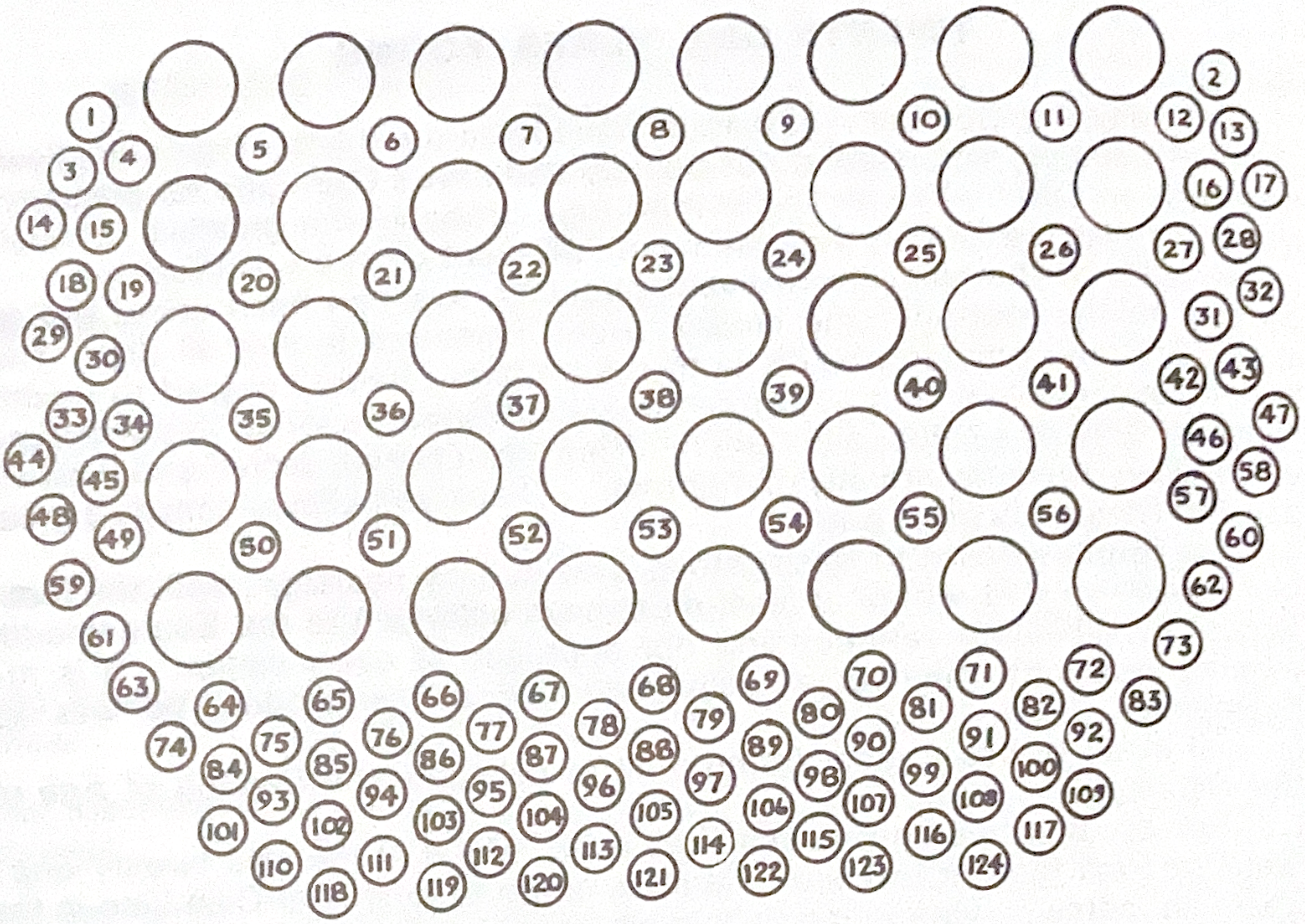
You are needed to ensure the long term future of your locomotive.

TUBES

Yes folks, it's Tube Time again. Under current regulations, the boiler tubes in Clan Line are due to be removed in mid-1991. Unless there is a technological breakthrough in the interim, they will not be capable of reuse because the end will be damaged, so we will have to buy a new set.

Our last "Buy a Tube" appeal was a great success: 84 contributors donated 124 complete tubes, the remainder being made up by anonymous donors and smaller gifts. We are launching the 1991 tube appeal now in order to have a fund ready to go when the time comes. The prices are £20 for a small tube, of which there are 124, and £100 for a large tube, of which there are 40.

Front Cover: Waterloo—1st October, 1988—Ian Allan Network Day: A view from the Signalbox by 35017.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So here it is again—the notorious Tube Chart. Please buy a tube for '28 for '91 ! We must point out that your name will not appear on the tube, since it would be invisible once installed in the boiler, but it will be marked for posterity on the chart. Please send contributions to :

M.N.L.P.S. TUBE APPEAL,
60 Hazel Way
Fetcham, Leatherhead
Surrey KT22 9QD.

Cheques etc., made payable to Merchant Navy Locomotive Preservation Society.

LOCO REPORT

With our recent overhaul now behind us and a couple of successful railtours under our belts perhaps this is the time to reflect on our seven month stay at Swindon. Firstly, why Swindon? when there were alternatives which had been offered to us, namely Tyseley and Crewe. However, the logistics of getting regular working parties to these locations from the South East were mind-bending. Rather than just take Swindon at face value; (remember much had changed since our last visit there in 1986, when the works was still functioning as a B.R. repair facility). John Bellamy, Bob Judge and myself paid a visit to the once proud home of the G.W.R. during the dying days of 1987 to meet the man setting up the Swindon Heritage Centre, Ivor Huddy. We were shown around the once busy 'A' Shop, now empty and derelict, and then on to 9 Shop, which was crammed full of machinery which had been set aside for future use in the proposed Heritage

Centre. The next port of call was 19 Shop which, should we decide to opt for Swindon, would be our home for the duration of the overhaul. 19 Shop was not shown to its best advantage, it was untidy, cold, dingy, and there were holes in the roof, having been left in this state when B.R. vacated the premises. It was explained to us that this was only temporary and that machinery from 9 Shop was due to be moved in early in the New Year, the first being the wheel lathes we would require for our wheels to be profiled. We talked over some of the facilities we would need should we decide to come, washing/toilets, lighting, power and water, which could be successfully arranged. So after a very useful site meeting, we departed to think matters over. I have to admit, the decision being left to me, that I came away uncertain about what to do, but after a couple of days to think matters over and consider the options, there was no choice. It is very easy with the benefit of hindsight to say the right or wrong decision was made but I tried to use my imagination and look at the potential of the facilities offered us at Swindon, and a few days later telephoned Ivor to let him know we would like to go to Swindon as soon as a movement for the loco could be arranged. Thus it was that on the evening of 12th February, "Clan Line" set out from London en route for Swindon. Arrival was in the early hours and so a few hours sleep was managed by the working party until it was time to begin finding our way round to 19 Shop. Not only was it a feather in the cap for the Heritage Centre, but also for our society in that 35028 was the first steam loco to arrive under its own power and to go on and complete a major overhaul to main line standards. Suitable local press and television coverage had been arranged by Ivor, pity about the weather, it was atrocious. By the time everyone had taken their photos and had a drive of the loco, it was mid afternoon, time to drop the fire, move into our new home and let every thing begin to cool down before beginning the overhaul proper bright and early the next day.

Having gone into some detail of the overhaul in the last couple of Loco Reports, I will jump right to the other end of our stay at Swindon and attempt to portray the fevered activity that ensued in our efforts to make our requested appearance at London Bridge. Due to extra work having to be done on '28, we had been regretfully unable to appear at L.S.W.R. 150 at Woking, therefore we were desperate not to disappoint the organisers of the London Bridge Gala event, although we did inform them that it was possible we wouldn't make it due to the very tight schedule we had imposed on ourselves.

You can assume that at this point that the great majority of the repair work had been done and was simply a case of assembling it all together! The date was the middle of July and the loco was still perched on the packing blocks shown in the last issue. We had received the new driving wheel springs and the driving wheel axleboxes were expected to be delivered late due to some machining problems at the sub-contractor. Anyway, we had to push on regardless and face each problem as it arose.

16th/17th July. Final assembly of bissel truck with newly conditioned axleboxes, side control gear and new springs. The weekend was rounded off by lowering the loco back onto the bogie and bissel trucks which together with the two temporary trollies we had cobbled together took the full weight of the loco which at least made it mobile again.

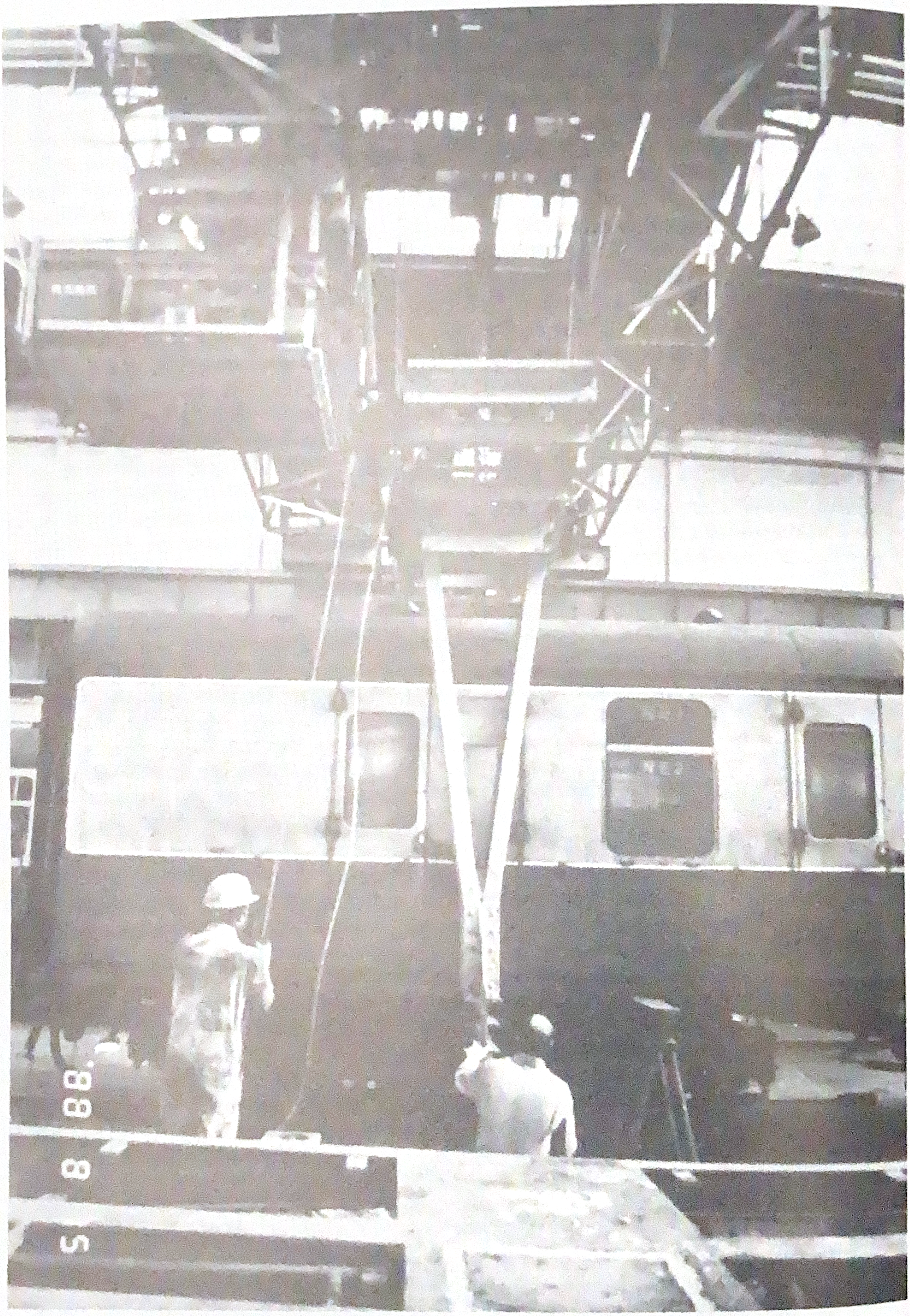
23rd/31st July. This was to have been a weeks " work in " with the intention of rewheeling the loco and reassembling as much as possible with a steam test at the end. Everything was laid on, people had booked holidays, a crane had been hired, then at the last moment, it was clear that the axleboxes would not be available. Hurried measures were taken to prevent the crane from arriving and to reduce the number of people required for the work which we could still carry on with. The boiler was washed out and boxed up, the grate was reassembled, tender doors were repaired and new oiling pads soaked and fitted to all the axleboxes on the loco and tender. A hole was found in the blowdown discharge pipe and this had to be removed for renewal, which turned out to be quite a saga. B.R. arrived to do the ultrasonic testing on all the axles and these were given a clean bill of health. The boiler was filled with water and we then attemped to carry out a hydraulic test as requested by the B.R. boiler inspector to test the repairs to the flexible stays. With only a small hand test pump to pressurise a boiler of our size it was not surprising that the test had to be abandoned after several hours pumping with the pressure refusing to increase above about 80/90 p.s.i. The hand pump was obviously insufficient to overcome the small leaks past the regulator. This was overcome by the good offices of the B.R. boiler inspector, making a motorised test pump available to us. A couple of days later the boiler was successfully tested to 250 p.s.i. This test was also observed by our insurer's inspector, who then required the boiler to be drained and opened up to inspect the firebox stays, as he had been unable to do his examination at the time of the B.R. examination due to holidays.

6th/7th August. The centre section of the brick arch which had had to be removed to effect repairs to the flexible stays was rebuilt, the cladding on the throatplate between the frames around the flexible stays was refitted with a little difficulty, and the glands on the regulator stuffing box were re-packed. This is not a job to be undertaken lightly as it involves removing several of the cab controls.

Extra to all this dashing to and from Swindon each weekend should be mentioned the many occasions when members have given up their time to work on the loco on weekdays. This was especially necessary during the repainting of the loco as quiet still conditions were needed without the constant interuptions which are a feature of a weekend working party. With the disappointment of the axleboxes not being to hand when required, a further " work in " was arranged when we were assured they would be. The date for delivery was 15th.

13th/21st August. The axleboxes duly arrived as promised and this gave us an outside chance of making an appearance at London Bridge. To achieve this the axleboxes had to be scraped in, the loco rewheeled, all the rods and motion assembled, the brake gear fitted, the injectors and pipework fitted, the hopper operating gear fitted and the tender coupled up and the loco steamed in just four days, so that it could undergo a B.R. steam test on 19th. As to just how we managed to achieve this can only be imagined by those who did not take part. I can assure those people however, that a great deal of stamina was a prerequisite and the ability to go without sleep was also a distinct advantage. The scraping in of the axleboxes is a job which cannot under any circumstances be skimped and can be and indeed, was, a monotonous and tiring job. The axleboxes having been remetalled and machined to the axle journal sizes then require to be hand scraped using a blue marking medium to ensure an even bearing surface on the axle journal. There is no short cut to achieve this and failure to do the job properly will almost certainly lead to running " hot boxes " in service. The six boxes were dealt with by changing shifts every couple of hours or so and took those involved two days working 18 hour days, but the effort put in has paid off, as there has been no sign of any of the axleboxes running warm. The rewheeling took place on the 17th without too many problems and immediately the team set to on the reassembly of the loco, again working into the small hours. With the B.R. steam test due to take place on the 19th, the loco was lit up on the evening of the 18th inside 19 Shop, and brought into steam early the following morning. The only job outstanding being fitting the rather complicated brake rigging, and this was still underway when the B.R. mechanical inspector arrived to begin his six monthly examination, which is necessary to gain a main line certificate. There were several points to which he drew our attention, none serious, but needing rectification before we could set foot (or rather wheel) on the main line, and he could see no difficulties, subject to a satisfactory reweighing. This last point was a potential problem, as the rear end of the loco was sitting down some 2 inches lower than it should. The boiler was also tested to full pressure by the B.R. boiler inspector and witnessed by our insurers, and there were no problems here. On the evening of the 19th, arrangements had been made by Ivor Huddy for the loco to be turned and taken down to the now isolated weighshop at the other end of the site, ready for us to begin the reweighing early the next morning. On our previous two visits to Swindon, it had taken us a couple of days to get the loco and tender " set up " to our liking, so if everything went according to plan, Clan Line should be ready for the main line and London Bridge the following weekend. Without going into details, we were unable to achieve our goal at the end of the weekend, despite all the knowhow we could lay our hands on, including Harry Frith, ex Eastleigh erecting shop foreman. No matter what we did, we could not get the rear end of the loco to its correct height, and the concensus of opinion was that our new driving wheel springs were suspect.

It was a very despondent working party that dragged itself away from Swindon that evening. With all the tremendous efforts that had been put in since February, and especially during the latest " work in," we had fallen at the last hurdle. What were we to do now? The first priority was to prove one way or another whether the new springs were to specification and our thanks go to Ivor and his men who during the following week removed one of the springs, and to Willie Bath from 35027 who made the necessary arrangements and took the spring to Eastleigh to be tested. The result was half expected and indeed the sample spring was too weak. Logically the remaining five having been made to the same standard were unsuitable. Having at least solved the problem of why the loco wouldn't sit level, we were now in a position sitting at Swindon bereft of driving springs and with no spares. There seemed no alternative other than to seek out a kind owner of a Merchant Navy class loco who was prepared to make available to us on loan a set of springs from his loco. Enquiries quickly revealed one such source and I must mention our deep gratitude to Jim Arkle from 35010 " Blue Star " for allowing the springs from his loco to be used on ours while we get our weak springs sorted out. Thus it was that a small working party



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assembled at the Royal Victoria Docks in East London on 28th August, to remove the springs from 35010. The whole job went surprisingly easily considering the length of time they had been on the loco, and about three hours work saw them into the back of a pick-up truck and on their way westwards to Southall, and later in the week to Swindon. In the meantime, Ivor and his men had removed the remaining five springs from '28 and together with a small midweek working party put up the " new " springs.

The loco was lit up on 2nd September—for weighing, a loco should be in steam, fully coaled and watered—ready for another attempt at weighing. This time after a few problems I'm glad to report our goal was achieved and we were in a position to request a test run from B.R. Of course the loco had been turned to face London, so that we could go to London Bridge, and our original intention of a test run back to Southall was not now possible, due to crew shortages in the London area, and as we now were intending to make our requested appearance at the Eastleigh Open Day, hurried alterations to movements had to be made. On the 16th September the loco was put into steam, taken back on to the turntable and turned to face Westwards as our test run was now to be to Eastleigh.

Departure time was to be around 2 a.m. on the 17th and following a " daily " mechanical examination to ensure that the outstanding faults picked up on the six monthly exam had been dealt with, loco and support coach left the Heritage Centre on time. Progress to begin with was of necessity slow to aid the bedding in of the new bearings, 20 m.p.h. to Wooton Bassett, gradually increasing to 40 m.p.h. by Westbury with frequent stops to " feel round " to check that nothing was getting warm. Everything was in order and at Salisbury, where a class 33 was hooked on the front, the instruction to the driver was " not to exceed 50 m.p.h." Arrival at Eastleigh as dawn broke found the bearings still " cold," and we were towed right around the works and shunted back onto one of the roads outside the old erecting shop alongside 35027 " Port Line," which had arrived by road the previous day. Once again there were a brace of Merchant Navies back home. A few hours sleep were snatched and then it was out with the cleaning cloths to make a special effort in the turn out of our loco for this special occasion. The stars of the open day were obviously 35027 and 35028, probably a unique sight these days. There were queues for access to both footplates all day long, with many people who had past associations with the engines paying their respects and commenting on their fine turnout.

On 30th September the loco was again put into steam at Eastleigh in readiness for its move to Waterloo and an appearance at the Ian Allen Network Day on 1st October. Again the move was overnight straight up the main line piloted by two class 33 diesels, arriving around 3 a.m. The same routine of a few hours sleep before being on duty in shifts throughout the day to answer the many questions of the general public. There was no doubt that our loco was the star attraction and was the first steam loco in steam at Waterloo since the end of steam traction in July 1967.

At 8 p.m. we departed for Southall, but due to engineering works, instead of going via Kensington (Olympia), our route took us back down the line to Basingstoke, reverse, Reading West, reverse, and on to Southall,

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Lifting our ' new ' NAV at Old Oak. *Photo by:* John Bellamy.

THE SOUTH
YORKSHIREMAN

which was some 90 miles as opposed to 15 on the more direct route. Anyway, we didn't mind as it helped with the running in of the axleboxes.

On the 8th October the loco was again in steam for the move across to Marylebone and a loaded test run to High Wycombe and back. This was necessary as a main line certificate is not now granted following major repairs until the locomotive has undergone a test run hauling a realistic load. No problems arose and the B.R. inspector was satisfied with our loco's performance. This left the way clear for our return to main line running, which was to be a severe test for Clan Line. We were booked to work " The South Yorkshireman " on 15th September and a " Shakespeare Limited " the following day, some 600 miles in total.

The " South Yorkshireman " Marylebone to Sheffield and back was exhausting for the working party, up at 4 a.m. to get the engine ready and over to the station for an 8 a.m. departure. Our usual support coach was away undergoing a brake overhaul so we had to make do with our ' new ' and recently overhauled second string vehicle (a full brake), with no seating or home comforts, and so we had to make do as best we could. The NAV is however, ideal for carrying the extra coal we need for these long trips, which is indeed why we purchased it. The loco performance on this trip was of a very high standard indeed, perhaps the highlight being 59 mph, over the top of Hatton bank with 12 coaches. Arrival back at Marylebone was on time at 20.50 and then the loco had to be watered, coaled, turned the fire cleaned and back to the depot for a " daily " examination. Here it was found that a lubricator had run dry and the right hand crosshead had begun to lose some whitemetal. The time was now 3 a.m. and too late, or rather we were too tired to set about any repairs. Sleep was the answer, and up early the next morning and whilst the loco was being cleaned the slidebars were stripped down and checked, cleaned and reassembled ready for a 10.30 departure to Stratford upon Avon. It was with relief that we returned right time at Marylebone without any problems.

A successful, if exhausting, return to main line operation for our society, with favourable reports from the crews on the engines performance particularly the riding which has been much improved.

A few final words of thanks to all who have given both time and money to enable Clan Line to return to running condition once again. Particularly our sincere gratitude goes to Ivor Huddy and his men from " Active Force " without whom we could still be at Swindon. Their professional knowledge and help was outstanding and we came to look upon them as personal friends. I can only speak for myself here, but I'm sure others would agree that our period at Swindon during 1988 will always be remembered with afffection.

Andy Davies.

'28 forging steadily ahead up the 1 in 100 from Sheffield to Bradway Tunnel on 15th October. *Photo by:* Duncan Gomersall.

Clan Line on show at Eastleigh and Waterloo—24th September and 1st October. *Photos by:* David Easson, Jim Menday, Howard Reynolds and 35017.

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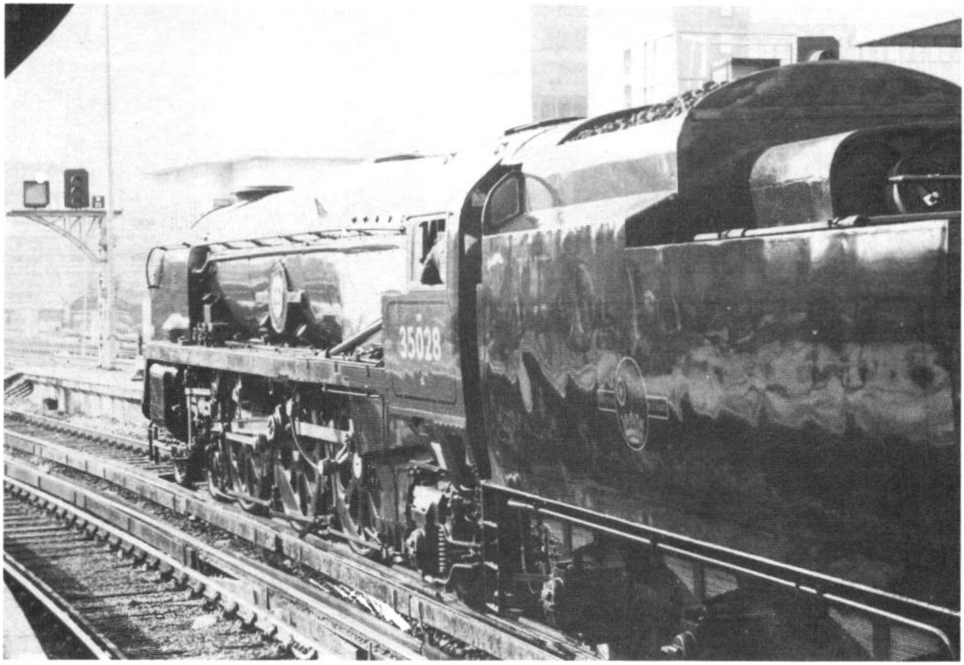
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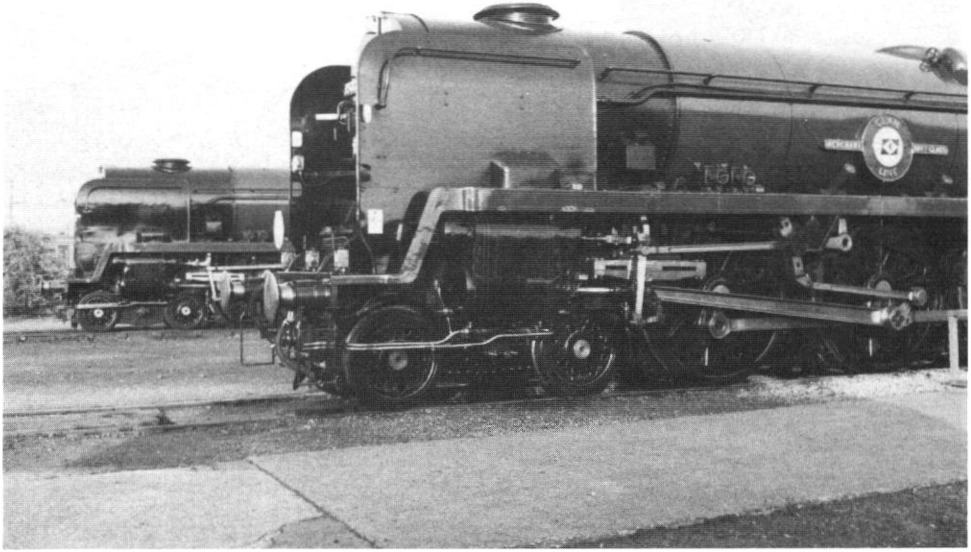

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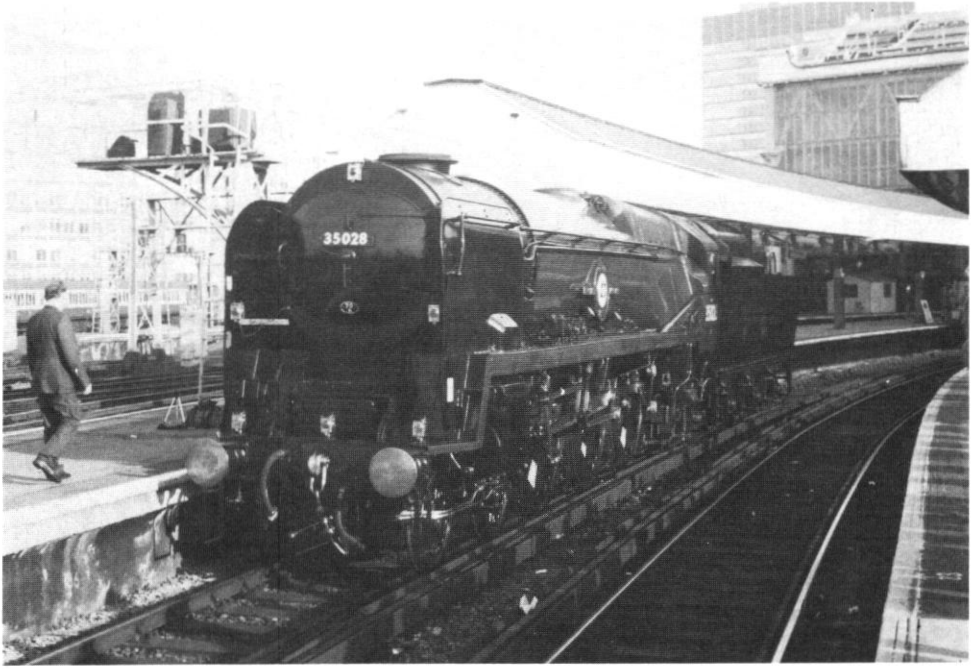

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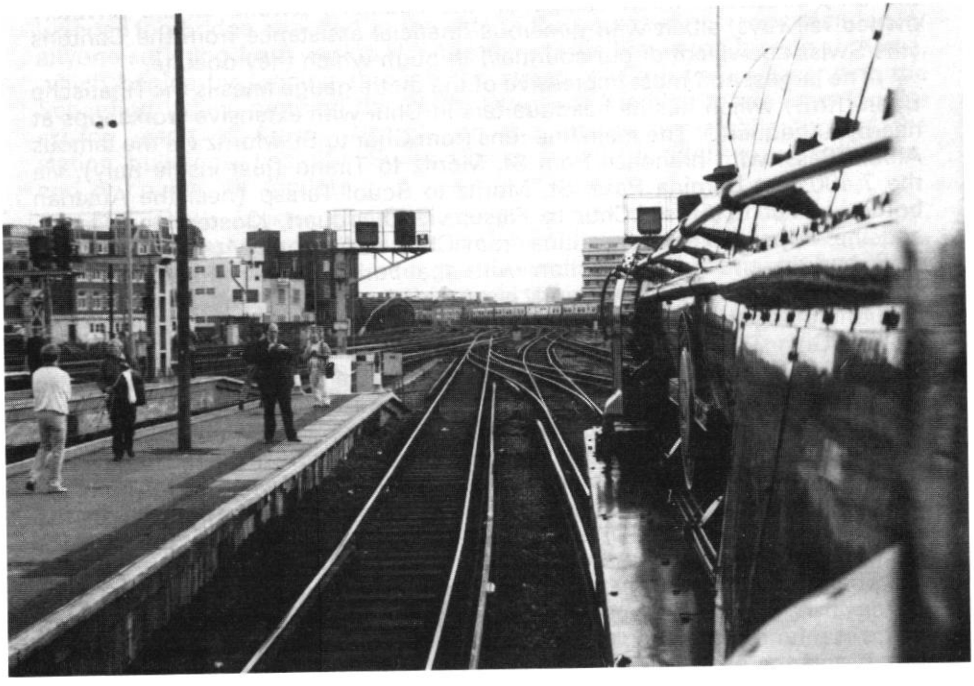

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LINE

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Pencil with eraser, green with gold Clan Line locomotive outline	£0.37
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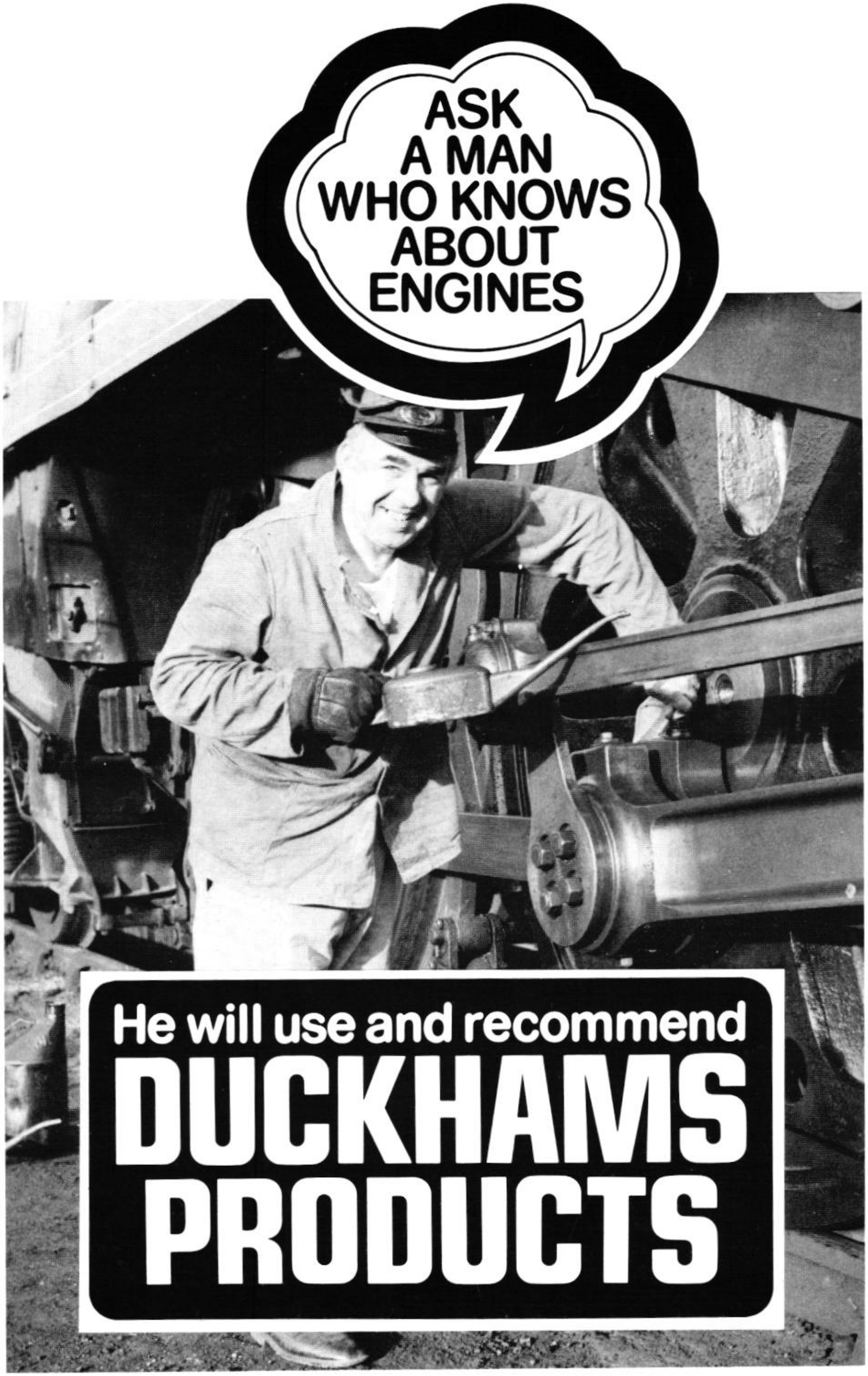
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